

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary

Title: What is ADHD?

Name: Adannia Enyioha, MS4

What is ADHD?

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a common behavior disorder that affects an about 8% to 10% of school-age children.

Who gets ADHD?

Boys are more affected than girls but it is not yet understood why.

What are the 3 types of ADHD?



Inattentive Type

- makes careless errors in schoolwork
- difficulty maintain attention in play activities
- difficulty following instructions
- avoidance or dislike of tasks that require mental effort
- tendency to lose things like toys, notebooks, or homework
- distractibility
- forgetfulness in daily activities



Hyperactive-Impulsive Type

- Fidgeting or squirming
- difficulty remaining seated
- excessive running or climbing
- difficulty playing quietly
- always seeming to be "on the go"
- excessive talking
- blurting out answers before hearing the full question
- difficulty waiting for a turn or in line
- problems with interrupting or intruding



Combined inattentive and hyperactive Type

- combination of the other two types and is the most common

When to see your doctor?

See your doctor when this behavior has lasted past age 7 at both home and school

How is ADHD diagnosed?

There is no laboratory test or imaging for ADHD. A diagnosis depends on clinical evaluation. To make the diagnosis:

- The child must fall into one of 3 types described above by 7 years old
- The behavior must last for up to 6 months
- The behavior must affect at least 2 areas of life (school, home, day care, play activities, sports, friendships)

The doctor will make sure there is no other reason for your child's behavior such as stress in the family like divorce, recent move to a new town, sickness or change of school. Your doctor will also check for problems with hearing, vision, anxiety or depression to avoid wrong diagnosis. Your doctor will ask you, another adult member of the family and schoolteacher or counselor to fill out some common forms to get a better idea of your child's behavior to make the diagnosis of ADHD

What is the treatment for ADHD?

Stimulants or medications that increase attention, like Ritalin have been used for ADHD for many years. They have side effects like not feeling hungry and having too much energy and refusing to sleep.

Some non-stimulants have been approved for ADHD treatment and have fewer side effects than Ritalin. Amantadine, a medication used to treat the flu, is being studied for use as an ADHD medication. Some scientific studies show that it does not have as many side effects as Ritalin. However due to the need for more research its use has not yet been approved in the US.

Where can I get additional information on ADHD?

ADHD Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/adhd/DS00275>

Children and Adults with ADHD

<http://www.chadd.org/>

Key Words:

ADHD

Inattentive Type ADHD

Hyperactive Type ADHD

Ritalin

Amantadine

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Family Medicine Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.